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REPORT OF THE EXPERT MEETING ON CONSUMER INTERESTS, COMPETITIVENESS, COMPETITION AND DEVELOPMENT

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva
17 to 19 October 2001

CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
I.	Outcome of the Expert Meeting	2
II.	Chairperson's summary	6
III.	Organizational matters	14
Annex		
	Attendance	16

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Chapter I

THE ROLE OF CONSUMER AND COMPETITION POLICIES IN ENHANCING COMPETITIVENESS AND DEVELOPMENT

Outcome of the Expert Meeting

The Expert Meeting made the following proposals on issues which should be taken into account in UNCTAD's work on consumer interests, competitiveness, competition and development.

1. The Expert Meeting offered the opportunity for an enriching exchange of expertise and experiences on the relevance of competition law and policy and consumer protection policies for enhancing competitiveness in developing countries and economies in transition. The discussions covered member countries' relevant experiences in matters of consumer protection and competition policy, including privatization and deregulation of public sector utilities; the implications of globalization for cross-border anti-competitive practices; and public policy and capacity-building for rule-making and enforcement. The importance of national and regional traditions and cultures was stressed as the background against which the content and the implementation of consumer protection and competition laws should be defined.

FINDINGS

2. Whilst recognizing that globalization and deregulation of goods and services markets may have the potential to improve the circumstances of consumers in many countries, the meeting also recognized that these processes pose major challenges when markets fail to protect consumers and access to redress mechanisms. The challenges posed by competition among developing countries to attract foreign investment, as well as the permeability of frontiers to unwarranted imports in some countries, were noted as deserving particular attention in this regard.

3. It was recognized that privatization and deregulation in developing countries (particularly the least developed countries among them) and the drive to limit the role of Governments in the market place may go hand in hand with regard for consumer interests and the need for an institutional and legal framework for consumer protection. It was pointed out that in some cases privatization and deregulation have been effected with scant regard for consumer interests and often in the absence of an institutional and legal framework for consumer protection. The processes of deregulation and liberalization have thus exposed consumers in developing countries and economies in transition to unsafe products and services and fraudulent business practices.

4. It was further recognized that national regimes for consumer protection would need to protect consumers and promote sustainable consumption patterns without imposing undue constraints on business, in order to achieve the development and growth of effective markets.

5. It was noted that properly implemented competition and consumer policies can make a key contribution to competitiveness and sustainable development.

6. In the light of these findings the Expert Meeting made the following recommendations for consideration by the Commission on Trade in Goods and Services, and Commodities at its sixth session, to be held in Geneva from 4 to 8 February 2002.

A. At the national and regional levels

7. Governments are invited to take the necessary steps to implement the UN Guidelines for Consumer Protection (1999) as a matter of urgency and in this regard incorporate the consumer protection dimension into their macroeconomic policies and legal frameworks. In this respect, Governments should also take account of the interests of consumers and actively negotiate on their behalf when entering into binding international agreements.

8. Governments should develop and maintain competition and consumer protection policies which are mutually reinforcing, with a view to promoting consumer welfare, competitive markets, competitiveness and development.

9. Governments should take into account consumer views and interests at all levels of policy- and decision-making processes and in this respect they should create specific channels and mechanisms for dialogue with consumers and their representative organizations. It was suggested that Governments should adopt mechanisms to delegate to civil society certain reconciliation and consumer arbitration powers.

10. In applying consumer protection laws and other regulations Governments should take due care to ensure that measures benefit all sectors of the population, particularly the informal sector and the poor.

11. Bearing in mind the need to reach rural areas and illiterate consumers, Governments should, as appropriate, develop and/or encourage the development of consumer information and education programmes.

12. Governments should take the necessary steps to establish consumer courts.

13. Governments are invited to take measures with a view to combating the production and marketing of poor-quality and unsafe products, including the development of black markets for the sale of such products.

14. Governments should take the necessary steps to include consumer education programmes in the curriculum of formal and non-formal education.

15. Enterprises should obey relevant laws and regulations of the countries in which they do business and conform to the appropriate provisions of international standards.

16. Enterprises should conform to the provisions of the UN Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Principles and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business Practices, particularly section D, "Principles and rules for enterprises, including transnational corporations".

17. Each private sector organization should adopt a code of conduct for its members in order to promote ethics, subject to competition laws.

18. Consumer associations and representatives should, for their part, familiarize themselves fully with the UN Guidelines for Consumer Protection in order to be able to play their role of educating consumers, particularly those in the informal sector, thereby contributing to the implementation of those guidelines.

19. Consumer associations are encouraged to be proactive in their interaction with government and intergovernmental agencies and with businesses in order to advance and safeguard consumer views and interests.

20. Consumer associations should develop joint regional training and information programmes in cooperation with government, business, international organizations, and academic and other civil society organizations in order to create synergies for promoting consumer welfare.

B. At the international level

21. UNCTAD should call upon the international development partners to provide technical and financial assistance in the field of capacity-building at the human resource and institutional levels for the formulation and enforcement of consumer policies. In this respect, financing organizations and external donors are invited to make voluntary contributions in support of those objectives.

22. The Expert Meeting noted with appreciation the important and useful work done by UNCTAD in the field of competition law and policy and consumer protection.

23. UNCTAD should strengthen its institutional machinery and promote consumer interests with a view to monitoring implementation of the UN Guidelines for Consumer Protection.

24. UNCTAD should convene Expert Meetings on the protection of consumers and regulation of public services and on international mechanisms for consumer protection, including in relation to cross-border transactions, cross-border fraud, e-commerce, etc.

25. UNCTAD should, upon request, provide member countries with technical assistance in adopting or reforming and better enforcing consumer protection and competition laws and in implementing the UN Guidelines for Consumer Protection as expanded in 1999. Resources permitting, UNCTAD should also assist consumer organizations in this respect.

26. UNCTAD should cooperate with other relevant international organizations and consumer associations with a view to taking stock of ongoing work, disseminating information and creating synergies towards an integrated approach for more effective implementation of the UN Guidelines for Consumer Protection.

27. Some experts recommended that UNCTAD should further study the interface between competition, consumer interests, competitiveness and development by focusing on how markets can integrate the informal sector, work better for the poor and generate growth, employment and export opportunities.

28. UNCTAD should develop and maintain a website network on consumer protection containing information on existing consumer protection activities, policies, organizations and legislation, including regional and international agreements containing consumer-related provisions.

29. UNCTAD should develop a model law or laws on consumer protection.

Chapter II

CHAIRPERSON'S SUMMARY

1. The Expert Meeting on Consumer Interests, Competitiveness, Competition and Development organized its discussions under three substantive themes: (a) globalization, competition, competitiveness and consumer protection; (b) national competition law and policy, regulation and consumer welfare; and (c) public policy and capacity-building for rule-making and enforcement.

A. Globalization, competition, competitiveness and consumer protection

2. Under this first theme, the experts discussed the experiences of poorer countries in assessing the impact of globalization on competition, competitiveness and consumer welfare. It was reported that during economic reforms in Uganda, extensive economic liberalization, including the privatization of State enterprises, had led to a number of anti-competitive practices by foreign firms which constituted abuse of dominance. Such practices included buying off competitors, and dumping defective, hazardous and/or substandard goods on domestic markets. It was reported that some firms had been accused of selling substandard lubricants to rural consumers, and marketing suspect dairy products, beef, cooking oil and other food items under the guise of food aid. Other examples of unscrupulous business practices included the misuse of ISO 9000 as a product quality mark. Also, competition had been distorted by leading firms' price-fixing and market-sharing arrangements, particularly in the beverages and petroleum industries. It was reported that the trade associations formed by those two industries were an excuse for fixing prices and sharing markets.

3. It emerged from the discussions that many developing country Governments had largely been unable or reluctant to respond to complaints lodged by consumer protection associations and the general public for a number of reasons. These included the absence of competition and consumer protection legislation or authorities, a lack of resources – both human and financial – to investigate complaints, impotence in the face of global mergers and acquisitions for fear of retaliatory action by some large firms' home country, political interference, and fear of frightening away foreign direct investment.

4. Experts pointed out that in some cases, while looking for the benefits of globalization many countries were grappling with anti-competitive practices arising from mergers and acquisitions by mega-firms as a result of trade liberalization and privatization. These mergers and acquisitions had been mainly in the banking and financial sectors, and in tourism.

5. Problems relating to various types of international fraud, such as pyramid schemes, had been uncovered by developing countries. An intensive education campaign in that connection had had little effect, particularly among consumers from the poorer sections of the population, and many had lost money as a result of such schemes. While some of the abuses had been prosecuted in some countries under common or criminal law, there was an urgent need for specific legislation. Other problems, which Governments were trying to come to

grips with, included jurisdictional issues relating to electronic commerce and cases of counterfeiting.

6. It was indicated that in countries whose competition law did not include provisions relating to mergers and acquisitions, there was some scope for examining mergers and acquisitions under legal provisions covering anti-competitive practices and for recourse to common-law principles. It emerged from the discussions that this issue should be revisited and that competition laws should include specific provisions relating to mergers and acquisitions, with factors such as market thresholds, scales for competitiveness and the size of domestic markets in a global market being taken into consideration.

7. At the regional level several integration groupings, including the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), had formulated community competition policies that were expected to boost national laws. The harmonization of national competition laws and issues concerning the extent to which sovereign rights might have to yield to regional concerns remained to be tackled. Other issues, particularly for countries that had not yet introduced competition law, related to the availability of resources for implementation and the costs associated with it. In addition, participants referred to the potential conflict with other agreements, including on trade and investment issues, and to implementing competition policies in smaller economies while giving specific consideration to the particular vulnerability of those economies.

8. If consumers were confused by the information given by the seller, it might be appropriate to require greater disclosure. Where there was an uneven basis of comparison, pro-competitive standardization would be appropriate and standards bureaux had an obvious role to play in this regard. It was pointed out that information-sharing among competition and consumer protection authorities was vital for curbing international frauds such as pyramid schemes. A question raised in this context was how to protect consumers in a global economy. It was reported that the United States International Consumer Database monitored such schemes, and that the database was available to any country that might wish to use it or contribute information to it. Consumer education on a global basis, information-sharing and transparency were necessary in order to make consumers better able to protect themselves from unscrupulous business practices. Countries needed to undertake joint action to safeguard themselves against cross-border fraud. Areas of particular concern to consumers in e-commerce were security issues related to payments on-line and consumer redress in the event of disputes. It was stressed that competitive markets were the first line of defence, and Governments were urged not to compromise free-market principles in the quest for consumer protection.

B. National competition law and policy, regulation and consumer welfare

9. In principle, competition and consumer protection policies share the same goals. In an ideal world the market should protect consumers, but in reality markets fail regularly, mainly because of misinformation, and thus the benefits of competition are often lost. Examples of

market failure in this respect which were cited included cases where consumers were inexperienced or confused by product information; where the basis of comparison was confusing, for example when different units of measurements were used for like products; and where sellers had no interest in protecting their reputation. Such problems were likely to increase with the use of the Internet for the sale and purchase of goods and services.

10. In a number of developing countries the introduction of economic reforms opened the door to poor-quality goods and services. Market forces were expected to regulate prices through fair competition, but frequently this did not happen. Despite the existence of competition authorities and consumer protection legislation in many developing countries, asymmetric information still placed consumers at a great disadvantage.

11. Several experts reported that consumer protection legislation, which could encompass amendments to the existing consumer protection Acts or competition laws, were either under consideration or had been introduced. The approach to consumer protection sought to achieve greater redress in terms of the imbalance in knowledge and power between suppliers and consumers.

12. Another issue that was discussed was how, in the absence of specific legislation, common law would function to protect consumers effectively in cases of misinformation. The experience of one common-law country indicated that since different groups of consumers were likely to have different tastes and preferences, it was important that the provisions of consumer protection laws be flexible enough to accommodate different consumer perspectives. In some legislations various common-law provisions worked effectively to secure redress through the Sale of Goods Acts, which dealt with merchantability, and or the General Law of Contracts, which dealt with misrepresentation. For example, in Jamaica, consumer redress with respect to pyramid schemes had been secured through criminal law. However, a major drawback with regard to seeking redress through both common and criminal law was the high costs associated with the process. It was reported that in some least developed African countries, consumer protection laws advocated the establishment of small claims courts and the bringing of class actions as a way of expediting consumer redress and reducing the costs of access to justice.

13. With regard to misleading advertising, it transpired that the American approach, which was comparable to that of the European Union, was to require the advertiser to substantiate any claim made in advertisements. Should the advertiser not have any proof of claims made, such advertisements would be deemed to be misleading. Consumer protection associations in several developing countries where there was no specific legislation had successfully challenged claims made by companies, and this had resulted in the removal of the offending advertisements. Efforts to remedy misleading information contained in advertisements emanating from a foreign enterprise proved more difficult, as this implied cooperation with foreign Governments and other consumer organizations since domestic laws did not have extraterritorial effect.

14. A number of experts disagreed with the assertion that competition law always served the interests of consumers. They were of the view that while competition law and policy had some objectives in common with consumer protection, these were two separate issues whose scope was different and between which contradictions arose from time to time. Consequently, it was necessary to look at the points of convergence and of divergence between the two and to ensure that consumer policy was not subsumed under competition policy. It was stressed that although consumer policy and competition policy might not converge in all aspects, they complemented each other.

15. The interface between competition policy, consumer protection and competitiveness, particularly in economies in transition, was questioned by some experts. Evidence of a causal relationship at both the national and international levels was called for. The American automobile industry and the fast-food industry were presented as cases in point, where competition from foreign competitors led to new products and more competitiveness.

16. The point was made that for many developing countries the protection of national industries was still the priority and that this necessitated careful monitoring of local and imported products. In the light of low incomes and widespread poverty, it was necessary to ensure the availability of cheap local substitutes. The informal sector played a critical role in ensuring the availability of affordable goods and services to the poor, who often constituted the majority of the population in developing countries. In the absence of capacity to combat restrictive business practices, increased imports might not benefit consumers or raise standards of living. In this respect, competition policy had to be placed in the context of development.

17. In response to these concerns, it was pointed out that competition law and policy were intended to protect competition and not the competitor. Foreign competition represented an opportunity for local producers to upgrade their products, and consumers were presented with a choice of products. It was to be expected that producers that proved non-competitive would be driven out of the market; this was acceptable if it meant that the consumer would have access to better-quality goods at a competitive price. If consumers were left unable to afford expensive imports and more affordable local substitutes were driven out of the market, there might be sufficient grounds for anti-dumping measures to be instituted in order to preserve competition.

18. It was emphasized that there was a strong link between consumer protection and competitiveness. The need for consumer sensitization and education was stressed particularly in the case of developing countries, where the majority of consumers were hampered by illiteracy and other information deficiencies. Very often poor consumers accepted defective goods, attributing their purchase to bad luck, and neglected to lodge a complaint. In many cases, the informal sector's clientele believed that that sector provided cheaper and perhaps better-quality goods. However, a study in Venezuela revealed that prices were cheaper only in the case of prepared food – all other goods were more expensive than in the formal sector.

19. Consumer education entailed the sensitization of both consumers and business, because businesses often saw consumer organizations as their enemy. In the light of the inadequate information available to developing country consumers, consumer education necessitated simplifying consumer protection laws and reaching rural consumers by ensuring that consumer education programmes provided adequate coverage and by developing innovative ways to transmit messages to consumers. Also, it was agreed that consumer education should be introduced into the curricula of schools and universities. In this context, the experience of the volunteer job programme of the Uganda Consumers Protection Association, which involved the sending out of field officers to remote areas, including schools, was germane. An important lesson to be learned from the American experience was the use of colourful and stimulating educational material that could capture the attention of the consumer, developed with the help of marketing experts and in conjunction with business organizations that were willing to share the costs of producing such material.

20. It was noted that conflicts between competitiveness, intellectual property rights and consumer protection could often not be resolved easily. Cases in point were genetically modified products and pirated music. In this context, the role and function of regulation for consumer protection represented both costs and benefits for consumers. For example, intellectual property rights protection raised the costs to consumers. However, such costs might be deemed worthwhile, although this might not always be the case where, for instance, health concerns could be considered to be too serious compared with the costs imposed on the producer, should the supplier be forced to comply with health standards. One expert was of the view that health standards should not be compromised even in the informal sector, citing the example of successful programmes for informal-sector small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to upgrade health standards and progressively comply with consumer protection laws throughout the economy. The point was also made that although the informal sector could play an important role in developing economies, if any breaches of competition law or consumer protection were identified, consumer redress must be secured.

21. The discussions on microenterprise policies focused attention on the problems and challenges facing SMEs and, in particular, on how other development policies interacted with that sector. It was explained that in many developing countries a large proportion of the population lived in poverty and earned their living from the informal sector. Consequently, there was a need to examine how the principles of competitiveness and consumer protection would and should be applied to the informal market in order to make it more efficient and allow it to achieve its full potential.

22. Critical differences were recognized as inherent between the formal and informal markets. The two sectors differed in *inter alia* technology use, firm size, types of goods and services, legal status and organizational skills. Given these critical differences, informal markets tended to manifest certain characteristics of potentially competitive markets. These might include free entry and exit, and a large number of traders, although the existence of non-homogeneous products and a lack of information might confuse consumers and lessen competition.

23. It was pointed out that the informal sector could play a development role in the developing countries, and that there was therefore a need to revitalize and empower this sector. One area which was identified as playing a crucial role in this empowerment was micro financing. The evolution of micro finance institutions (MFIs) had made it possible for informal market operators to access human technical and financial resources, especially loans. A case study was reported where the MFIs had adapted themselves to the needs of informal market operators and where access to loans on favourable terms had been developed. Governments and other development agents were therefore called upon to accommodate the informal sector and adopt those terms in programmes suitable for the sector.

24. The experts also discussed the existence of natural monopolies, including public utilities, which operated through multiple local distribution agencies. Often consumers complained of inefficient State monopolies but at the same time objected to privatization of those enterprises. This was due to the fact that many public utilities had no easy substitutes for local markets, and often resulted in private companies investing in service extension only in markets where consumers could afford to pay high prices, and investments could yield high returns. It was reported that in Ghana consumers in rural areas paid more for water than those in urban areas. A key issue was who should pay for the social cost after the privatization of basic utilities and how to ensure that the perceived private monopolies did not abuse their dominant positions. This called for sector regulatory policies and supervision of privatized utilities.

25. Concerning possible conflicts between regulation and competition policy, it was argued that regulatory decisions should not pre-empt the entry of new competitors since this might adversely affect consumer welfare. A major deficiency was the lack of clear, regular and stable procedures for consumer participation in the regulatory processes, particularly in privatized enterprises. Regulations might be an appropriate tool for allocating resources, provided that the interests of the population at large were taken into consideration in those regulations.

26. It was pointed out that consumers' representation could be increased through their participation in public hearings or other processes which were then reflected in regulatory decisions. Examples of such participation were given. It was emphasized that this participation should occur at all stages and be carried out through decentralized civil society bodies belonging to the public administration or specialized agencies for consumer protection.

C. Public policy and capacity-building for rule-making and enforcement

27. The role of Governments, enterprises and consumer associations in the promotion of competition was emphasized. Experts drew attention to the need to intervene in the market as a "driving force" in cases of limited competitive markets and limited demand, and where

there were difficulties in identifying the components of certain goods. Also, consumer associations needed to play a proactive role in protecting consumers.

28. Governments should coordinate their consumer protection activities with entrepreneurs and consumers and trade unions. It was emphasized that consumer protection policies differed among countries and this fact had to be reflected in consumer protection laws. Nevertheless, common features in the approaches to resolving various problems, and the experience accumulated, should be the subject of special studies and international cooperation.

29. In particular, experts noted the need for Governments to play a proactive role instead of preventive and reactive roles. Such a role would involve various phases, including the adoption of real and measurable indicators, monitoring markets and sectors, and introducing efficient mechanisms for dispute settlement and mediation at national level. An effective consumer protection strategy should include the provision of training, the establishment of networks of regulatory agencies, and effective legal frameworks.

30. Information-sharing was discussed as an important aspect of the consumer decision-making process. Consumers should be made aware of their rights under the various legal frameworks governing consumer affairs. The establishment of networking mechanisms to reach rural consumers was seen as an important step in reaching remote areas in developing countries. It was indicated that a recommendation for the establishment of a consumer ombudsman's office to address consumer complaints had been presented to Zambian and Peruvian policy makers for consideration.

31. Examples were given from Zambia, where consumer protection provisions were included in competition law and enforced by the competition agency. It was recognized that dealing with both consumer and competition policies in the same legislation and in one organization posed many implementation and logistical challenges. The solution lay in the formation of strong consumer organizations and lobby groups to address consumer matters.

32. It was noted that different countries were at different stages of implementation of consumer policy. Countries which had recently adopted competition legislation faced two main problems: what approach to adopt and where to start? It was suggested that the main directions were indicated in the UN Guidelines for Consumer Protection as expanded in 1999. In this connection, it was proposed that UNCTAD should provide technical assistance, including through the exchange of experiences among developing countries and economies in transition.

33. The experience gained so far in some regional groupings of developing countries pointed to the need for harmonization of consumer law with minimum substantive provisions. In this connection, the concept of sustainable consumption was an important objective which the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) pursued. However, harmonization of national laws might have an impact on the cost for enterprises and might entail obstacles to

competition among enterprises and thus render local products less competitive at the global level.

34. How to achieve a working partnership between the Government and civil society on matters related to consumer protection was also discussed. Civil society organizations in many developing countries complemented and supported government initiatives in this area. It was stressed that such organizations should not compete with the Government but should strive for a healthy dialogue and partnership with it.

Chapter III

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

A. Convening of the Expert Meeting

35. The Expert Meeting on Consumer Interests, Competitiveness, Competition and Development was held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, from 17 to 19 October 2001.

B. Election of officers

(Agenda item 1)

36. At its opening meeting, the Expert Meeting elected the following officers to serve on its bureau:

Chairperson:	Ms. Shantini Thiruneelakandan (Sri Lanka)
Vice-Chairperson-cum-Rapporteur:	Ms. Kerstin Berglöf (Sweden)

C. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

(Agenda item 2)

37. At the same meeting, the Expert Meeting adopted the provisional agenda circulated in document TD/B/COM.1/EM.17/1. The agenda for the Meeting was thus as follows:

1. Election of officers
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
3. The role of consumer and competition policies in enhancing competitiveness and development
4. Adoption of the outcome of the Meeting

D. Documentation

38. For its consideration of the substantive agenda item, the Expert Meeting had before it the following documentation:

"Consumer protection, competition, competitiveness and development" (TD/B/COM.1/EM.17/2);

"Recommendations of the Regional Seminar on Consumer Protection, Competition Policy, Competitiveness and Development, held in Cartagena de India, Colombia, from 23 to 25 July 2001" (TD/B/COM.1/EM.17/2/Add.1);

"Recommendations of the Regional Seminar on Consumer Protection, Competition Policy, Competitiveness and Development, held in Accra, Ghana, from 20 to 21 August 2001" (TD/B/COM.1/EM.17/2/Add.2);

"Recommendations of the Asia-Pacific Regional Seminar on New Dimensions of Consumer Protection in the Era of Globalization, held in Goa, India, from 10 to 11 September 2001" (TD/B/COM.1/EM.17/2/Add.3);

"Recommendations of the International Conference on Competition in Countries in Transition, held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, from 1 to 2 October 2001" (TD/B/COM.1/EM.17/2/Add.4).

E. Adoption of the outcome of the Meeting

(Agenda item 4)

39. At its closing meeting, the Expert Meeting authorized the Rapporteur to prepare the final report of the Meeting under the authority of the Chairperson.

Annex

ATTENDANCE *

1. Experts from the following States members of UNCTAD attended the Meeting:

Angola
Argentina
Bahamas
Bangladesh
Benin
Bolivia
Brazil
Brunei Darussalam
Burkina Faso
Burundi
Central African Republic
Chad
China
Colombia
Comoros
Costa Rica
Côte d'Ivoire
Cuba
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Dominican Republic
Egypt
Ethiopia
France
Gambia
Georgia
Germany
Ghana
Guyana
India
Indonesia
Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Italy
Jamaica
Jordan
Kenya
Lao People's Democratic Republic
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
Madagascar
Malawi
Mexico
Morocco
Mozambique
Myanmar
Nepal
Niger
Nigeria
Norway
Peru
Philippines
Romania
Russian Federation
Rwanda
Saudi Arabia
Senegal
Spain
Sri Lanka
Sweden
Syrian Arab Republic
Tunisia
Turkey
Uganda
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
United Republic of Tanzania
United States of America

* For the list of participants, see TD/B/COM.1/EM.17/INF.1.

Uruguay
Venezuela
Yemen
Zambia
Zimbabwe

2. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented at the Meeting:

Arab Labour Organization
South Centre

3. The following specialized agencies and related organization were represented at the Meeting:

International Monetary Fund
United Nations Industrial Development Organization
World Trade Organization

4. The following non-governmental organizations were represented at the Meeting:

General Category

Exchange and Cooperation Centre for Latin America
Europe-Third World Centre
International Chamber of Commerce
International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
Consumers International
International Organization for Standardization